

**BI-DIRECTIONAL SHIFT REGISTER
CONTROL CIRCUIT**

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Field of the Invention

[0001] This application is related to the field of electronic shift register circuits and more specifically to a bi-directional shift register control circuit.

Background

[0002] The use of bi-directional shift registers for drive circuits in liquid crystal displays (LCD) to allow a positive or a reverse display image. By causing the image to be scanned in one direction a positive, normal or non-reverse image may be displayed. However, when the image is scanned in a second direction, a reversed image may be displayed. United States Patent (USP) No. 5,894,296, entitled "Bidirectional Signal Transmission Network and Bidirectional Signal Transfer Shift Register," issued April 13, 1999, to Maekawa, teaches the use of bidirectional shift register control circuits in the LCD displays. In this circuit, the input and output terminals of the shift register are connected in a manner to construct a multi-stage structure, having a forward route gate element interposed in a connection between the output terminals.

[0003] Figure 1a illustrates an exemplary conventional bi-directional shift register and control circuit. In this illustrative example, three shift register stages, represented as 110, 120, and 130, are shown serially connected through control circuits 115, 125, and 135, respectively. Shift registers 110, 120 and 130 conventionally are referred to, and referred to herein, as the (N-1), (N) and (N+1) stages of shift register circuit 100. This generalization of shift register 100 into (N-1), (N) and (N+1) elements is terminology recognized by those skilled in the art in that the operation of shift registers is performed with regard to adjacent register elements. The generalization of shift register 100 is further appropriate as it would be understood that any

number of registers may be electrically connected, physically or logically, to create a shifting device of any size.

[0004] Each register further includes an input terminal and an output terminal. Input terminals for the three illustrated register stages are denoted as 112, 122, and 132, respectively, while the output terminals are denoted as 114, 124, and 134, respectively. Control circuits 115, 125 and 135 are electrically connected to an input terminal of a corresponding register stage, whereas the output terminal of each of the register stages is electrically connected to an adjacent bi-directional control circuit. Hence, the output terminal 124 of register stage 120 provides an input to control circuits 115 and 135, while output terminals 114 and 134 of shift registers 110 and 130, respectively, provide input to control circuit 125 and not shown adjacent register stages.

[0005] Control lines CL_1 145 and CL_2 140 are used to set control circuits 115, 125, and 135 in a manner to direct the data in the shift register to be shifted in a positive or reverse direction. Typically control lines CL_1 145 and CL_2 140 are set to different values. When CL_1 145 is set to a high level, CL_2 140 is set to a low level to operate in a first direction and reversed operate in second direction. .

[0006] Figures 1b and 1c illustrate positive and reverse timing sequences of the shift register 100 shown in Figure 1a. Referring to Figure 1a, a pulse 116p output on output terminal 114 is provided as an input to control circuit 125, which is further provided to input terminal 122 of shift register 120. Shift register 120 then provides pulse 126p from output terminal 124 to input of control circuit 135. Control circuit 135 provides an input voltage to shift register 130 through input terminal 132. Shift register 130 then provides pulse 136p at output terminal 134. This progressive shifting of an initial pulse in a positive, i.e., "p," direction continues for each of the stages in the shift register device. Figure 1c illustrates a pulse shifting sequence in a reverse, i.e., "r," direction for the shift register shown in Figure 1a. In this case, pulse 136r on output

terminal 134 is input to control circuit 125, which then provides an input to register 120.

Register 120 generates pulse 126r on corresponding output line 124 that is applied as an input to control circuit 115. The process is repeated for each shift register in the shifting device.

[0007] Figure 2 illustrates a conventional control circuit representative of an N^{th} register

5 stage, for example, control circuit 125 and shift register 120. Within control circuit 125 are switches 210 and 220 that are operable to direct either the output of the $N-1$ stage, i.e., 116p, or the $(N+1)$ stage, i.e., 136r, to input 122 of register stage 120. In this illustrated case, switches 210 and 220 are represented as n-type Field Effect Transistors (FETs). Control lines 140 and 145 are electrically connected to switches 220 and 210, respectively. In this case, when a high
10 signal, e.g., V_{dd} , is applied to control line 145 and a low signal, e.g., V_{ss} , is applied to control line 140 switch 210 is closed and switch 220 remains open. An input from an $(N-1)$ stage, e.g., pulse 116p, is provided to the input of register stage 120 and data is shifted from the $(N-1)$ stage to an N^{th} stage. Alternatively, when a high signal is applied to control line 140 and a low signal is applied to control line 145, switch 210 remains open and switch 220 is closed. In this case, an
15 input from the $(N+1)$ stage, e.g., 136r, is provided to the input of register stage 120 and data is reverse shifted from the $(N+1)$ stage to an N^{th} stage.

[0008] A problem with the conventional implementation is that it may suffer from a gate element leakage. For example, if gate element 220 has a sufficient voltage leakage between its source and drain terminals, i.e., it cannot be sufficiently turned off by the control signal on CL2,
20 that under positive shifting operation with CL2 at low level, for example, the pulsed signal voltage '(N+1) out' may leak into the input terminal 122 of the electrically adjacent N^{th} shift register stage and introduce an error.

[0009] Hence, a shift register control circuit that allows for a complete turnoff of the non-conducting transistors is desirable.

Summary

[00010] A bi-directional shift register circuit comprising, a plurality of shift registers, each having an input and an output terminal, and a bi-directional shift controller circuit associated with each of said shift registers is disclosed. The bi-directional shift controller circuit comprises

5 a first input connected to a first shift register output terminal and a second input connected to a second shift register output terminal. means to apply a first and a second control voltage, wherein said first and second control voltage are different, and a combinatorial circuit responsive to said first and second control voltages to apply an indication of an input received from either said first shift register or said second shift register to said corresponding shift register input terminal. The

10 combinatorial circuit configuration is that of a NOR gate or a NAND gate.

Brief Description of the Drawings

[00011] Figure 1a illustrates a conventional bi-directional shift register circuit;

15 [00012] Figures 1b and 1c illustrate timing diagrams of the bi-directional shift register shown in Figure 1a;

[00013] Figure 2 illustrates a conventional bi-directional shift register control circuit;

[00014] Figure 3a illustrates a first exemplary embodiment of a bi-directional shift register control circuit in accordance with one aspect of the invention;

20 [00015] Figures 3b and 3c illustrate timing diagrams of the bi-directional shift register control circuit shown in Figure 3a;

[00016] Figure 4a illustrates a second exemplary embodiment of a bi-directional shift register control circuit in accordance with one aspect of the invention; and

[00017] Figures 4b and 4c illustrate timing diagrams of the bi-directional shift register

25 control circuit shown in Figure 4a.

[00018] It is to be understood that these drawings are solely for purposes of illustrating the concepts of the invention and are not intended as a definition of the limits of the invention. The embodiments shown in Figures 3a through 4c and described in the accompanying detailed description are to be used as illustrative embodiments and should not be construed as the only manner of practicing the invention. Also, the same reference numerals, possibly supplemented with reference characters where appropriate, have been used to identify similar elements.

Detailed Description of the Invention

10 [00019] Figure 3a illustrates a first exemplary embodiment 300 of the present invention. In this first embodiment, shown as a NOR gate combinational logic circuit, first transistor or device 310 is electrically connected to a first control line, CL_1 145, and a second device 325. Second device 325 is electrically connected between first device 310 and third device 320. Third device 320 is electrically connected to a known voltage, in this case, V_{dd} . A fourth device 330 is electrically connected between a second control line CL_2 140 and an output terminal that may be electrically connected to a shift register 120 input terminal. One terminal of the first device is further connected to the output terminal of the fourth device for subsequent connection to the input terminal of shift register 120. The gate terminals of the first and third devices are connected to an electrical means that enables a voltage to be concurrently applied thereto. Similarly the gate terminals of the second and fourth devices are connected to a means that enables a voltage to be concurrently applied thereto.

[00020] In this exemplary embodiment, an output of an (N-1) stage, referred to as voltage '(N+1) out', 350, is provided to the gates nodes or terminals of n-type transistor 310 and to p-type transistor 320 at electrical connection or terminal 352. Similarly, an output of a (N+1)

stage, referred to as voltage '(N+1) out' 360, is provided to the gate nodes or terminals of n-type transistor 330 and to p-type transistor 325 at electrical connection or terminal 362.

[00021] Source terminals of n-type transistor 310 and transistor 330 are connected to control line CL₁ 145 and CL₂ 140, respectively. In the present invention CL₁ 145 and CL₂ 140 are set to different voltage levels to operate NOR circuit 300 as either a bi-directional positive shifting control circuit or a bi-directional reverse shifting control circuit

[00022] Figure 3b illustrates a timing sequence for operation of NOR circuit 300 as a bi-directional positive shifting control circuit in accordance with the principles of the invention. In this case, control line CL₁ 145 is set to a low voltage, V_{ss}, and control line CL₂ 140 set to a high voltage, V_{dd}. When the voltages of both '(N-1) out' 350, and '(N+1) out' 360, are at low level, n-type transistors 310 and 330 are turned off while the p-type transistors 320 and 325 are turned on. Voltage '(N) in' 121 is, thus, set at a high voltage, V_{dd}, as the only the path between node 122 and the source terminal of transistor 320 is conducting.

[00023] However, when voltage '(N-1) out' 350 is at high level, represented as pulse 354 and voltage '(N+1) out' 360 is at low level, n-type transistor 310 and the p-type transistor 325 are turned on while n-type transistor 330 and the p-type transistor 320 are turned off. In this case, only the path between terminal 122 and the source terminal of transistor 310 is conducting.

Thus, voltage '(N) in' 121 at terminal 122 is at a level of that of CL₁ 145, which is V_{ss}. As voltage '(N) in' 121 is at a low voltage, represented as pulse 126p', it is inverted with regard to input

pulse 354. On the other hand, when voltage '(N-1) out' 350 is at low level and voltage '(N+1) out' 360 is at high level, n-type transistor 330 and the p-type transistor 320 are turned on while n-type transistor 310 and p-type transistor 325 are turned off. In this case, only the path between terminal 122 and the source terminal of transistor 330 is conducting. Thus, the voltage '(N) in' 121 at terminal 122 remains substantially at a high level, i.e., V_{dd}. The pulsed signal '(N+1) out'

is blocked away from triggering shift register stage (N) by the invented bi-directional circuit under positive shifting operation.

[00024] Referring now to Figure 1a, to explain the time shift in voltage '(N+1) out' 360, when shift register stage (N) 120 receives a pulsed signal at its input terminal 122, it will generate an output pulse '(N) out' with a timing shift of a clock width similar to that shown in Figure 1b as 126p. The output pulse '(N) out' is fed to bi-directional circuits 115 and 135. Under positive shifting operation, bi-directional circuit 115 does not response to '(N) out' while bi-directional circuit 135 will generate a pulsed signal from '(N) out' in order to trigger next shift register stage (N+1). Similarly, after stage (N+1) receives a pulsed signal at its input terminal 132, it will generate a shifted output pulse '(N+1) out', similar to that shown in Figure 1b as 136p. The pulse of '(N+1) out' is provided to bi-directional circuit 125 and bi-directional circuit of subsequent stage (N+2) (not shown in Fig. 1a). As the process continuing, pulses are generated and sequentially shifted.

[00025] Operation of NOR circuit 300 as a bi-directional reverse shifting control circuit is more clearly shown with reference to Figure 3c. Figure 3c illustrates a timing sequence for operation of NOR circuit 300 as a bi-directional reverse shifting control circuit in accordance with the principles of the invention. In this case, control line CL₁ 145 is set to a high voltage, V_{dd}, and control line CL₂ 140 set to a low voltage, V_{ss}. When the voltages of both '(N-1) out' 350, and '(N+1) out' 360, are at a low level, n-type transistors 330 and 310 are turned off, while p-type transistors 320 and 325 are turned on. Voltage '(N) in' 121 is, thus, set at a high voltage, V_{dd}, as the only the path between node 122 and the source terminal of transistor 320 is conducting.

[00026] When the voltage '(N-1) out' 350 is at low level and voltage '(N+1) out' 360 is at high level, represented as pulse 364 the n-type transistor 330 and the p-type transistor 320 are

turned on while the n-type transistor 310 and the p-type transistor 325 are turned off. In this case, the path between terminal 122 and the source terminal of transistor 330 is conducting so that the voltage (N) in, represented as pulse 124, is at a level of that of CL₂ 140, which is V_{ss}.

[00027] Figure 4a illustrates a second exemplary embodiment 400 of the present

invention. In this second embodiment, shown as a NAND gate combinational logic circuit, the configuration of each of the devices is the same as that described with regard to Figure 3a and need not be repeated. In this embodiment, p-type transistors replace the n-type transistors and n-type transistors replace the p-type devices shown in Figure 3a. Furthermore, the known voltage applied to third device 420 is set at a low voltage, V_{ss}.

[00028] In operation of this second embodiment of the invention, the inverse of the voltage output of an (N-1) stage, referred to as '(N-1)*out', 450 is provided to p-type transistor 410 and concurrently applied to n-type transistor 420 through electrical connection 452.

Similarly, the inverse or inverted voltage output of an (N+1) stage, referred to as '(N+1)* out', 460, is provided concurrently to p-type transistor 430 and to n-type transistor 425 through

electrical connection 462. Furthermore, source terminals of the p-type transistor 410 and transistor 430 are connected to control line CL₁ 145 and CL₂ 140, respectively. As previously discussed, in the present invention CL₁ 145 and CL₂ 140 are set to different voltage levels in order to operate the NAND circuit as a bi-directional positive or reverse shifting control circuit.

[00029] Figure 4b illustrates a timing sequence for operation of NAND circuit 400 as a bi-

directional positive shifting control circuit in accordance with the principles of the invention. In this case, control line CL₁ 145 is set to a high voltage, V_{dd}, and control line CL₂ 140 set to a low voltage, V_{ss}. When the voltages of both '(N-1)*out' 450, and '(N+1)* out' 460, are at high level, p-type transistors 410 and 430 are turned off while the n-type transistors 420 and 425 are turned

on. Voltage '(N) in', 121 is, thus, set at a low voltage, V_{ss} , as the only the path between node 122 and the source terminal of transistor 420 is conducting.

[00030] However, when voltage '(N-1)*out' 450 is at low level, represented as inverted pulse 454, and voltage '(N+1)* out' out 460 is at high level p-type transistor 410 and the n-type transistor 425 are turned on while the p-type transistor 430 and the n-type transistor 420 are turned off. Voltage '(N) in' 121 is at a level of that of CL_1 145 which is V_{dd} as only the path between terminal 122 and source terminal of transistor 410 is conducting

[00031] Figure 4c illustrates a timing sequence for operation of NAND circuit 400 as a bi-directional reverse shifting control circuit in accordance with the principles of the invention. In this case, control line CL_1 145 is set to a low voltage, V_{ss} , and control line CL_2 140 set to a high voltage, V_{dd} . When '(N-1)*out' 450 is at high level and '(N+1)* out' 460 is at low level, represented as inverse pulse 464, p-type transistor 430 and the n-type transistor 420 are turned on while the p-type transistor 410 and the n-type transistor 425 are turned off. In this case, voltage '(N) in' 121 is at a level of that of CL_2 144, i.e., V_{dd} , as only the path between terminal 122 and the source terminal of transistor 430 is conducting

[00032] When the voltages of both '(N-1)*out' 450, and '(N+1)* out' 460, are at high level, p-type transistors 410 and 430 are turned off while the n-type transistors 420 and 425 are turned on. Voltage (N) in 121 is, thus, set at a low voltage, V_{ss} , as only the path between node 122 and the source terminal of transistor 420 is conducting.

[00033] Further, when voltage '(N+1)* out' 460 is at high level and voltage '(N-1)*out' 450 is at low level, represented as inverse pulse 454, n-type transistor 425 and p-type transistor 410 are turned on while the n-type transistor 420 and the p-type transistor 430 are turned off. In this case, the path between terminal 122 and the source terminal of transistor 410 is conducting so

that the voltage '(N) in' 121 is substantially at a level of that of CL1 145, which is V_{ss} . In this case, voltage (N) in 121 remains at its normally low level state.

[00034] From the above operation steps, the input triggering signal voltage '(N) in' of stage (N) is provided by the output pulse of the $(N+1)^{th}$ stage and not from that of $(N-1)^{th}$ stage, so reverse shifting occurs.

[00035] While there has been shown, described, and pointed out fundamental novel features of the present invention as applied to preferred embodiments thereof, it will be understood that various omissions and substitutions and changes in the apparatus described, in the form and details of the devices disclosed, and in their operation, may be made by those skilled in the art without departing from the spirit of the present invention. For example, although the present invention has been shown using Field-Effect Transistors (FETs), one skilled in the art would recognize that other types of transistors, such as Floating Gate Transistors may be used without altering the scope of the invention disclosed herein..

[00036] It is expressly intended that all combinations of those elements that perform substantially the same function in substantially the same way to achieve the same results are within the scope of the invention. Substitutions of elements from one described embodiment to another are also fully intended and contemplated.